



**Mothers' Union Dioceses of Edinburgh; Terekeka,(S.Sudan); Nairobi, (Kenya);
Maiduguri, Osun North, (Nigeria); and Calcutta, (India).**

Intercessions January - April 2016

The Mothers' Union Theme for 2016: "A Celebration of Faith"

2016 is a very special year for Mothers' Union as we celebrate 140 years of faithful service to families and communities. So we want to take every opportunity to celebrate the faithfulness of God to us through the years; the faithful witness of our members, past and present; and our determination to continue to trust in God for all that lies ahead for us in the future.

Mary Sumner House has produced themed resources to help us celebrate through the year. As we use these resources, may we be filled with gratitude for all that has been achieved thus far, in the name of Mothers' Union, and inspired with faith for all that God has for us in the future.

From the MU Web - Refugee Crisis - September 2015. . .

“Mothers' Union has the potential to help churches and communities right at the grassroots level maximise the support they can give – through prayer, through advocacy and through practical support” said Worldwide President, Lynne Tembey. “We recognise the complexity of the situations faced by governments across Europe in dealing effectively with this crisis both in the short and longer term, and they are much in our prayers. However, regardless of current government and EU policy, this is a situation which requires a heartfelt response from each one of us. We welcome the leadership and encouragement of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby today, affirming that whilst our individual efforts may seem trivial, by working together we can resolve crises and make a difference.”

“Today I am calling on our membership across the world to make that heartfelt response. We have a long history of helping those fleeing persecution, conflict or violence. Whilst across many parts of the world: Africa, Oceania, and Asia, we are experienced in dealing with large-scale crises of this nature, it is many years since we have been faced by such a crisis in Europe. But our membership here, as across the globe, will, I know, have a heart to meet the humanitarian needs of families – both physical and spiritual. We are committed to playing our part in both the prayerful and the practical outreach of the Church.”

Mothers' Union has over 72,000 members in Europe, predominantly in Britain & Ireland, but including small branches within Europe of members who were themselves asylum seekers who fled conflict. Every year Mothers' Union across the world, most recently in developing countries, brings emergency relief to around 25,000 people through the provision of food, basic household provisions of blankets and sleeping bags, cooking utensils, water sanitation kits and following its affirmation on the 4th September that it is committed to supporting refugees, Mothers' Union membership has made a universally positive and heart warming response. Across the United Kingdom and Ireland, dioceses and branches have made contact with agencies preparing a coordinated approach towards receiving refugees in their local communities. Many are donating to appeals, such as that of Us who are coordinating the response activities on behalf of the Church in Europe. Members have also taken part in marches of support in London and Birmingham to date; engaged in activism and petitions towards local authorities, while others continue their existing activities to provide food and clothing for refugees and asylum seekers.

Prayers for the Refugee Crisis in Europe and the Middle East (from MU Web Site)

Lord Jesus, as a child, you fled from persecution; You have lived the fear, desperation, hunger, cold, and isolation that being a refugee brings. Bring comfort and peace of heart, Lord, to all those risking their lives to seek safety. Protect and guide their journeys, Lord.

“Faith, hope and charity, but the greatest of these is charity.” Father, bless those who see the plight of refugees, and who are meeting those needs.

For those who are exhausted, give them renewed strength;

For those who feel overwhelmed, give them courage;

For those who feel fearful, we pray for peace and compassion.

Lord, we want to hear your voice again, Guide us as we, as Mothers’ Union, reach out in your name to refugees both in Europe and the Middle East and those affected by conflict in South Sudan and Burundi, in Thailand and many other areas across the world. Bless the work of Mothers’ Union, and lead us, Lord, to fully play our part.

We thank God that our countries are blessed with resources. We uphold in prayer the governments across Europe and the Middle East, asking for wisdom for leaders to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Father God, you are our place of refuge and safety.

We pray for you to help us at this time of need. Give us compassion combined with wisdom to meet need with the right resources. May our practical action be rooted in your love as we reach out as the hands of Christ. Amen

A Prayer from St Paul's Cathedral;

God, no one is stranger to you.

In your kindness look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger.

Watch over migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, those separated from their loved ones, those who are lost and those who have been exiled from their homes. Bring them safely to the place where they long to be, and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and those in need.

Bless the work of those seeking to bring them relief. Awaken compassion and urgency in governments and all whose decision making can make a difference and guide the nations of the world towards that day when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice and of peace.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, who too was a refugee and migrant who travelled to another land searching for a home. Amen

Get Involved –

Pray for ways to do something today that will transform a family for life

Fundamental to Mothers’ Union is the ability to play an active part in helping our organisation to improve the lives of families in communities across the world.

Pray for ways to raise vital funds for Mothers' Union.

Pray about: Taking your stand against injustice with members worldwide.

Mothers' Union members around the world go out of their way to make a stand against injustice and support family life through campaigning and advocacy work. Pray that you too can make a difference in your communities and further afield.

A Celebration of Faith: Prayers & Reflections

Loving Lord, We give you thanks for the far-reaching vision of our founder, Mary Sumner. We look back with gratitude and praise for her witness, and for all that has been achieved thus far in the name of Mothers’ Union worldwide.

As we look forward with faith for all that is to come, help us to build a future together which will enable our work to flourish; through far-reaching vision and commitment to your will.

Lord of all, unite us in our shared vision of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships.

God of history and eternity, flood the eyes of our hearts with light to see your plans for our future. Help us to work together as one, united in vision and commitment to your will.

Together let us fix our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends for all that lies ahead.

We thank you, Lord, for those who came before us, and spurred us on to acts of love.

For those who have encouraged us to strive to make vision reality.

We pray that in our turn we too will play our part in envisioning those who are following on, to continue to share the love of Christ and to build God's Kingdom on earth.

January May 2016 be a time for healing the conflicts worldwide.

1st New Year's Day: Living God, on this day of looking forward and anticipating the future we praise you for everything you shall yet do among us – all that life continues to offer, all we have still to attempt and experience, all who in time will become part of our fellowship, all that will test and challenge us, and all which will bring us joy and fulfillment in the years ahead.

Living God, for all that you still hold in store, **we praise you!**

Almighty God, for all you are, all you have been, and all you shall be,

we praise you, in the name of Christ! Amen *Nick Fawcett Prayers for all Seasons; 1998*

The prayers below are taken from the Calendar and Lectionary Guide for 2015/16.

1st Fri. The naming of Jesus: Eternal Father, who gave to your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be the sign of our salvation: place in every heart, we pray, the love of him who is the Lord of every year and Saviour of the world; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

6th Wed. The Epiphany: O God, who, by the guidance of a star, revealed your only-begotten Son to the nations, grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at the last be led to see your glory face to face; who lives

10th Sun. The Baptism of the Lord: Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives

13th Wed. Kentigern (or Mungo), Bishop. c 603: O God, who in your wonderful providence chose blessed Kentigern, your bishop, to be a teacher and guardian of your Church: grant we pray, that we may ever follow the holy example of him whose feast day we now celebrate; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives

25th Mon. Conversion of Paul, Apostle: Almighty God, who by the preaching of your blessed apostle, Paul caused the light of the gospel to shine among the nations: grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion, may be united with him in bearing witness to your truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives

February:

2nd Tues. The Presentation of the Lord: Almighty and Everlasting God: As your Only-begotten Son was presented and received in the temple, so may we welcome and proclaim him as the light of the nations and the glory of your people; who lives . . .

10th Wed. Ash Wednesday (Returning to God) O Lord, grant that your faithful people may enter this season of penitence with faithfulness, and complete it with steadfast devotion; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives

March:

13th Sun: Passion Sunday: Merciful God, look upon your family as we travel to the foot of the cross; and, by your great goodness, guide us in body; that by your protection, we may also be preserved in heart and mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord,

17th Thurs. **Patrick, Bishop, Patron of Ireland, c 461:** Almighty and Everlasting God: who chose your servant Patrick to be the apostle of Ireland: grant that we, like him, may walk in the light of your gospel, as heralds and evangelists of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives

Holy Week:

20th Sun. **Palm Sunday: 24th Maundy Thursday: 25th Good Friday:**

27th Sun: Easter Day: Almighty God, who, through your Son, Jesus Christ, have overcome death and opened the gates of eternal life: grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of his resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives

April:

4th Mon: The Annunciation of the Lord: Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord: that, as we have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel to the Blessed Virgin Mary: **so by his cross and passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection;** through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who

23rd Sat: Consecration of the Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway, 2010:

Pray for all clergy in Edinburgh Diocese and in the other denominations.

25th Mon: Mark, Evangelist: Almighty God, you have instructed your holy Church with the heavenly teaching of your evangelist, Saint Mark: give us grace, that we may be firmly grounded in its truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives

The plans of the Lord stand firm, the purposes of his heart through all generations *Psalm 33:11*

We pray for: Our MU linked dioceses, for our past link of Sri Lanka and our own Diocese, for all the Office Bearers and members. We pray, especially at the start of the new Triennial, for the right decisions to be made for the future structure and running of Edinburgh MU.

We pray for those we know who are sick, awaiting treatment or operations, . . . *Hazel Davies.*

We pray for the lonely and bereaved, for those we know in Care Homes, for our Indoor Members.

We pray that the NHS problems may be resolved.

We pray for those affected by floods in many parts of the country, especially in the Lake District, (Cumbria), for many of whom for a second or repeated times.

We pray for the victims of terrorism, for the situation in Afganistan, for the troops recalled to serve once more, for the situation in Syria and all the other countries affected by disasters, whether natural or man-made – for correct decisions to be made concerning attempts to improve climate.

We pray for the right decisions to be made affecting the reforming of the European Union and for the correct result in the proposed referendum.

You have gifted the Church through the goodness of your Grace to be your hands and do your work, to be your voice and share your words, to bring healing to a fallen world and broken lives make whole. You have gifted your people with the blessings of your Spirit, the power to transform lives and make all things new. Now may our hearts receive, our mouths proclaim, our hands prepare for service, that the love that we have known might overflow the lives we live and pour into the hearts of others, that all might receive your Grace, your renewing Spirit and your love.

Amen

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